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Title: Need to expedite gauge conversion work of Ratlam-Fatehabad-Indore-Mhow-Khandwa-Amalakhurd-Akot-Akola section.

SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE (AKOLA): The gauge conversion of Ratlam-Fatehabad-Indore-Mhow-Khandwa-Amalakhurd-Akot-Akola section popularly known as North-South Link was sanctioned in the year 2008-09. However, the most important section of the project i.e. Akola-Khandwa has not been completed till date despite the fact that the rate of return of this section is 25.02 per cent, the highest ever in the history of Railways. It is also a fact that the development work of backward regions of Malwa, Vidarbha, Marathwada and Telangana will be affected in the absence of such North-South Link.

The recent collapse/closure of Sewagram-Nagpur section for 3-5 days due to heavy rainfall and washing away of bridge and accumulation of soil under the tracks have thrown the Indian Railways out of gear causing large scale hardships to the passengers and residents of the affected regions. It has now become imperative that the work of gauge conversion of the Akola-Khandwa section, an important section of North-South Link, may be completed at the earliest to protect the interests of the passengers, residents and to give impetus to the development work of the backward regions.